

A Feminist View of the ANC, DA and EFF 2021 Local Government Election Manifestos

Key Messages

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The Womxn and Democracy Initiative (WDI) is based at the Dullah Omar Institute at the University of the Western Cape. We identify as feminist, taking an intersectional approach to our work on realising social justice through active political participation of the public in the context of a feminist version of constitutional democracy.

Why we did this

We considered the three ANC, DA, EFF manifestos to provide information on the extent to which parties respond to an intersectional feminist agenda, including, and going beyond questions of women's representation and leadership and GBV.

- We also hope this will increase the tools available to hold political parties accountable after elections, to the promises they make to the public through their manifestos ahead of elections.
- We are not attempting to tell people how to vote. That would be irresponsible. Manifestos on their own are blunt tools to assess the potential future performance of a party.
- Manifestos only tell us what political parties say they want voters to hear before an election.

The manifestos cover a lot of ground, but with careful reading, we could get a fair sense of the priorities of the party – this was by noticing where they appeared to have dealt with an issue with greater care.

We hope that this analysis will serve beyond this time of election, to deepen the public conversation in a feminist way and to deepen ideas of what a feminist government might look like.

How we approached the project

Our analysis has a conceptual and theoretical position – we are oriented to intersectional feminism and social justice – we are not claiming to be objective:

- We challenge patriarchy as a system of power
- We link a feminist intersectional lens to other key social justice agendas that respond to neo-liberal capitalist systems

In our approach to intersectionality we have taken care not to write shopping lists of groups of people that end up losing specific meaning.

- We considered how the layers of exclusions and discriminations faced by different groups of people are differently affected by contexts linked to the various sectoral and thematic issues. This includes Black women, poor and working-class women, women living with or caring for people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people, migrant and refugee women, women living in rural contexts – farm women, women living under traditional authority, and in urban poor contexts. We also looked at women working in the informal economy and in insecure employment.

Who is responsible for what?

There are many things that are the joint responsibility of different levels of government (national and/or provincial and/or local) these areas were complex for us to understand.

We looked at the issues that the constitution clearly says is the responsibility of local government.

The situation at local level is seriously affected by decisions and political context at national and even provincial level.

- We looked at if the three parties, who all have a strong footprint governing or in opposition at national and provincial levels, dealt with these issues when it was appropriate.

In addition to the specific responsibilities for local government that are named in the constitution, we thought about the bigger objectives that the Constitution requires local government.

- Then we considered if there are roles that local government could do better to fulfil even when these may not be set out in specific laws and practice.

We were mindful that there are serious issues of underfunding at local level, and that we were not letting national and provincial government 'off the hook'.

Some big-picture takeaways

Women's invisible and unpaid work

Women and girls take on most of the care and domestic work in homes and in communities. This contributes to the country's economy.

Lack of, and disruption in access to electricity or water mean that women and girls mostly shoulder the additional tasks and stress to problem solve.

This has deep impacts on their wellbeing and ability to participate in society on equal terms as men.

This invisible labour negatively effects on women's ability to take up opportunities that may be provided for education, skills development, building houses and so on.

The unequal distribution of care and housework between women and men is rooted in entrenched patriarchal norms. It will need strong leadership at every level of society and consistent interventions to change.

All parties have failed to address, demonstrate understanding or give any priority to the issue of women's invisible and free labour.

Committing to improve democratic participation at local level

At all levels of government there are deep failures of democracy - the vision for a people-driven government is in deep crisis.

This is connected to a failure of transparency and of public access to information.

Access to information and ongoing, broad public involvement lie at the heart of the struggle for social justice and redistribution.

At local government level, this includes transparency and full participation in developing integrated development plans, housing and spatial planning, local council meetings and so on.

Participation must include plans to ensure that there is *meaningful* participation by the people in that community who face the heaviest layers of exclusion.

- Women, people with disabilities, young people, children, migrant and refugee people, women living on farms, and those living under traditional authorities for example.
- Political affiliation and social power may favour or prevent some people from being able to participate
- Sometimes even when people are able to get into the room, they may not be able to speak!

Only the EFF's manifesto provides any mention of strengthening the local measures in this regard, but this is not specific. Both the DA and the ANC rely on the assumption that the current mechanisms are fine— stating once or twice that they will be used.

The ANC overview

- Ruling party at national level, eight provinces and so their national policies can directly impact at local level.
- **The ANC manifesto is weak on gender and intersectionality.** They offer a 'catch all' sentence that includes women and that is placed in one section of the manifesto.
- The ANC have missed the opportunity to integrate thinking on gender by being specific
- The catch all line is an improvement on the ANC's previous *womenandyouth* messages, but it is surprising because the NSP-GBVF is more thorough.
- Internal factionalism has a big impact at local level, but they don't acknowledge this 'elephant in the room' or give the public any idea of how they will address this.
- The ANC manifesto does engage with how they will use national strategies to complement local government strategy.
- There is a creeping towards more 'centralisation' or giving more power to national government
- They don't offer many new strategies, where previous approaches to the important issues have failed. So they don't convince us why their promises will be different this time.
- They have some concrete content, but they are vague on setting targets and clear strategies.
- The ANC is the only party that acknowledges any of their own challenges.

The DA overview

- Official opposition at national level, and ruling party in Western Cape Province.
- **The DA manifesto is genderblind.**
- They don't address the things that drive inequality of women and other groups on people the margins – for that reason this manifesto is unlikely to significantly impact on the lives of those women.
- Many of the DA's proposals will maintain inequality, for example they emphasise reducing bureaucracy in the formal economy but will increase regulation on informal trade.
- The DA's internal powers struggles get less attention than the ANC, but also have impacts in areas where they govern.
- They present a 'governing party in waiting' offering and so miss opportunities to explain how they'll address serious issues affecting local government, in their role as national opposition.

The EFF overview

- The EFF are the second largest opposition nationally. They have no executive government experience on national or provincial level. They won a number of wards in 2016, but no municipalities.
- **Their statements on patriarchy and their intersectional approach is strong. But their proposals on GBV are mostly unspecific,** the ones they make lean towards popular appeal not what can be done at local level.
- The EFF manifesto is often a mixed bag of contradictions

- Many of their proposals are considered, most of the more grounded proposals include target setting and clear deadlines which make it very possible to monitor.
- The EFF make excessive and unrealistic commitments on important issues. They don't show they've set priorities. This makes it hard to believe most of their promises.
- Their consultations with different groups of people to develop the manifesto shows. Overall though this is disjointed.
- Only the EFF include a list of commitments for the public to hold EFF councillors who are elected accountable.
- The manifesto is well targeted to local level, but they also make many promises to deliver things that need national or provincial.
- The EFF sometimes rely on violent approaches to challenge power, both in parliament and in local councils. So their ability to be part of 'cooperative' government to deliver services is questionable.

Patriarchy, structural discrimination and gender

- Both the **ANC and EFF have some good language**: toxic patriarchy, triple oppression of women sexism.
- The DA's manifesto is conspicuously silent on women and gender signaling that **the DA don't prioritise women's inequality in their strategies**.
- EFF links women's emancipation to economic emancipation and upliftment of all.
- Both the ANC and EFF fail to meaningfully integrate women's lived experiences into the content across the different sectors in their manifestos.
- The ANC fails to link its manifesto commitments to the GBVF NSP except for the proposed law reform measures that are out of the scope of the local sphere, but doesn't address aspects of the NSP-GBVF that are the responsibility of local level.

Gender parity and intersectionality within local government

- To transform gender discrimination norms we need to see minimum **quotas for women in local government that are backed up by commitments to address patriarchal norms** and practices that exclude women and other excluded groups.
- Both the **ANC and EFF commit to minimum 50% quotas of women**, EFF indicates more than 50%.
- **DA don't** address quotas, their current representation of women is just over $\frac{1}{3}$.
- None of the parties express plans to address systems and practices that prevent women participating or being elected at ward level.
- The overall approach to intersectionality within government is weak.

Increasing transparency and ongoing public participation for democratic local government

- Transparent and participatory democracy is foundational for claiming other rights, local level is the most critical to protect and defend the current paper promises.
- **None of the parties addressed the barriers to participation of women and other excluded groups.**
- We saw different commitments to promoting transparency and political engagement from ANC, EFF and DA, with the strongest coming from the EFF and the weakest from DA.
 - ANC's promising offerings for transparency and participation lack strength, are not clearly defined and don't engage with the challenges previously faced.
 - The EFF make strong commitments to consult with all sectors in every locality, and some specific commitments to transparency that can be monitored, but may also fall within the overpromise strategy of the EFF.
 - The DA commitments to consultation are not strong, and promises to 'e-government' may be alienating.
- All parties avoid the complex terrain of cooperation to ensure constitutional democracy and protection of women's rights in areas that also fall under traditional authority.

Cooperation and financing for social justice and redistribution

- **None of the parties took any position on using funds raised through rates, levies and fines at local level for equitable redistribution.**
- The EFF and ANC name the problem of the national funding model.
- The ANC commit to 'ensure that the existing' progressive nature of equitable share spending is 'reaffirmed' - they don't commit to update or overhaul the formula. This is not the strong approach we'd expect to see from the ruling party and has a high lip-service value.
- The ANC make strong commitment to addressing some parts of the funding model from national level 'urgently'. This can be monitored.
- The EFF's other broader proposals for redistribution could impact on this issue, but they don't make proposals on the funding model.
- The ANC speak strongly of increased cooperation for national support to districts and metros, mainly drawing on their toothless District Development Model. There are notes of creeping centralisation in the ANC offering that would require deep consultation.
- The DA, despite its role as official opposition nationally and despite the profound inequalities in DA run metros, is silent on redistribution and on cooperation to address inequality.

Corruption and capacities

- ANC, EFF and DA make multiple and strong commitments to stop corruption.
- None are convincing that their measures will address it.
- None reflect on the ways that women and other excluded groups are affected
- EFF take strong stance against privatisation, outsourcing and tenders.
- DA commit to engaging in private partnerships to achieve goals. DA strongly committed to outsourcing and PPPs.
- ANC will strengthen selection, lifestyle audits and performance agreements of Mayors which can be monitored, but don't make proposals to strengthen other scarce skills and capacity.

Sectoral and thematic key messages

Women in the economy

- **None address the unpaid and underpaid care work of women.**
- All parties make strong statements about unemployment and job creation but none name women overall, urban poor and rural women facing higher levels of unemployment.
- The DA make no mention of any excluded or marginalised groups in relation to the economy (or anywhere else for that matter), their offerings favour those who have some level of resourcing.
- Positively, the EFF link economic emancipation to solving sexism and patriarchy.
- ANC lump 'womenand youth' together.
- All parties deal with informal traders/vendors but none identify that women dominate in the informal economy. The EFF promisingly, include that women(and youth) will have 50% access to their food markets.
- ANC say nothing about EPWP.
- In terms of social security, it is surprising that none address the local government role to ensure accessible and safe grant collection points and local transport to those points.

Land, spatial justice and planning

- Land ownership and reform is a national competency, local government must allocate land for housing development by other spheres.
- ANC don't use the manifesto to speak to land reform, EFF as it's their key issue take it up strongly.
- None of the parties make reference to women's ownership of land, EFF do lead with land justice in general. No other excluded groups of people are specifically mentioned by parties.
- ANC don't make commitments on utilising unused municipal/state land but DA and EFF do. EFF is particularly strong by including audits but doesn't address the need for cooperation, and DA's lip service value is high.
- The DA's orientation is opposite to social justice principles - towards 'land invasion' not occupation or justice and they commit to taking 'principled' legal action against. In contrast, EFF will make evictions from private property illegal.
- **All parties include commitments to address spatial injustice and inequalities, the EFF makes strong commitments but go too far, and they lack prioritisation, the ANC's undertaking to re-zone to improve integration lacks conviction given their track record. The DA offer sounds fair, but also questionable given their track record.**
- None of the parties directly address gentrification that results from high rates and rents.
- Save for one mention by the EFF, the parties are silent on prioritising women and other specific groups that are often excluded (such as documented or undocumented migrants) in terms of land use policies and spatial planning frameworks.
- **Despite high stakes and dominance of private interests, political elites and traditional authorities, none of the parties commit to addressing democratic participation, especially of more marginalised groups including women, in local level processes relating to planning and land use.**

Safe, affordable homes

- Safe, affordable and functional homes are foundational to dignity
- **Women, people with disabilities and migrants face additional violence and trauma linked to housing insecurity and dependence on others.**
- This is a complex multi-level area for delivery
- **Manifestos sections on housing are gender-blind**
- The ANC addition of women, and people with disabilities in their catchall list is a small step forward but not good enough.
- The EFFs expansive promises on housing have a high popular appeal and lip service quality.
- Housing demand and allocation systems have been fraught with controversy
 - ANC opted not to address questions of transparency and democracy in this regard.
 - EFF promise to make the 'list' public.

- DA start off well, offering transparency and fair process, before they undo that with an indication that their 'offer' relies on residents fulfilling certain duties, they ignore the structural factors that underpin some of the actions people take. This is patronising and leans to discrimination.
- **None grapple with involving housing beneficiaries in the project design and implementation processes. The DA 'self-built' strategies don't address this orientation to deep involvement.**

Food justice and agriculture

- Delivering food justice is a multi-level function, municipalities often disregard their roles.
- C19 increased hunger in SA disturbingly, there is increased public pressure to address food justice.
- **ANC and EFF address hunger or food security but DA ignore the issue.**
- **None recognise women's additional work to provide food, or that women experience hunger more.**
- **None acknowledge women as informal food traders, but the EFF, promisingly, include that women(and youth) will have 50% access to their food markets.**
- The offerings are weak. ANC take a more welfarist approach, the EFFs are grounded in the structural inequality of land, but are typically multiplied to the point of being unrealistic.
- ANC recognises that C19 increased hunger but they don't state that their woefully inadequate measures to address C19 fuelled that.
- **Encouragingly, ANC and EFF both address the municipal role to enable food markets and street trading.**
- **DA, gender-blind, show understanding of issues of food, markets, and informal trade but proposals are unspecific and include 'regulations' and measures that will favour people with some resources.**
- ANC commitments on urban food production seem sound, achievable and the plan is clear.
- EFF address urban food production, starting well and then ramping up the range of individually good commitments which collectively are unrealistic.
- EFF is the only party that grapples with supporting emerging farmers with resources.
- In terms of offerings on farming and rural areas the DA opt to deal with farmers only in terms of security measures.

Basic Services

- **None of the parties address the disproportionate impact that failures of water, electricity and sanitation delivery have on women's lives, the ANC has regressed in mentioning the impact that this may have on women specifically since 2016.**
- **The ANC and DA do not address the problems people face to register as indigent households in order to receive the free basic services.**
- **The EFF propose considered and strong measures to ensure that indigent households receive free basic services - to remove red tape so that everyone receiving social grants will automatically qualify for free basic services, and for social workers to undertake home visits to profile indigent households to ensure that they receive all free basic services by June 2022. However the scope of the promises and the timeframe of June 2022 are idealistic.**
- They all some understanding of issues relating to accessing water however there are no concrete plans in place to provide water in the short term especially to areas facing water shortages other than in areas where they may already govern.
- **None of the parties propose plans to regularly review and increase the range of basic services offered by municipalities from 50kWh of electricity and 6000L water.**
- The 2021 manifestos fail to clearly address targets to abolish pit latrines or unsafe toilets.

Safety and Justice

- Municipalities have a responsibility to ensure safety and crime prevention through safe communities and other social development and local law enforcement and policing.
- **None of the parties demonstrate local government GBV response and coordination with other spheres named.**
- The ANC makes broad promises about safety and defeating toxic patriarchy but no targets, it fails to link its manifesto commitments to the GBVF NSP.
- The EFF address big picture issues but are thin on actual plans for responding to GBV.
- the EFF does not name community safety or ensuring safe public spaces.
- The DA is silent on patriarchy, and clearly ignore key opportunities to address GBV at local level.
- **None of the parties consider improving local law enforcement and municipal police's capacities protect women, gender non-conforming people, sex workers, migrant women and women with disability's safety.**

Child care and education

- Local government has the responsibility for child care facilities, including ECD and after school facilities. These are critical to children's development and have benefits to the whole society.
- **None of the parties recognise that Providing child care services frees women and older girls from child care roles which prevent engagement in other economic activity, education, leisure.**
- **None of the parties recognise the dominance of women workers in the ECD, nor job insecurity and low wages, in municipal run or private facilities.**

- ANC are silent on ECD, DA make fleeting reference but nothing substantive. EFF are on the opposite end of the spectrum with grand promises.
- None of the parties deal with after-school facilities.
- Basic education is not a municipal function but they need to fulfil important functions that support basic education (infrastructure for water and sanitation, safety for and children to and from school etc).
- **ANC and DA barely address the issues of their role to support basic education, but EFF offer some thoughtful and then some overly grand promises in this regard.**

Health

- Health care is mainly a national and provincial competency, municipalities have a key role to play in creating safe and healthy environments, including pollution control, waste management and prevention. There are also municipal clinics in some districts and metros.
- A large focus of the manifestos appears to be more appropriate for national and provincial interventions as opposed to municipal services which should focus largely on food safety, environment and waste management.
- **Parties don't make reference to districts and their roles in providing primary healthcare services.**
- Although CHWs are not mainly under the competency of local government, The ANC and DA don't mention CHWs, the EFF do. However, they don't recognise the role that women CHWs play in society and safe, secure employment of CHWs was not mentioned in any of the manifestos.
- There are no plans by the EFF to resource the proposed increases in staff (health workers, social workers) and upgrades to facilities even though health has become an urgent consideration in all spheres of government since the C19 pandemic.